

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGUI 02714 150532Z POSS DUPE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGUI 2714

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, CD, CT
SUBJ: CHAD-CENTRAL AFRICA RELATIONS

1. THE CHADIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE CAE AHMET MAD TOINGUE HAS TOLD US THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES ARE STILL BESET WITH FRICTIONS, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE NO MAJOR ISSUES. THE CHADIAN FOREIGN MINISTER, DURING HIS VISIT TO BANGUI FOR THE CORONATION, HAD A SERIES OF SUBSTANTIVE TALKS WITH BOKASSA AND OTHER CENTRAL AFRICAN OFFICIALS. ONE OF THE SUBJECTS AT ISSUE WAS THE STILL UNSIGNED COMMUNIQUE FROM THE LAST CHADIAN-CAE JOINT COMMISSION MEETING (BANGUI 2166). ALTHOUGH BOTH SIDES ARE NOW AGREED ON THE LANGUAGE OF THE COMMUNIQUE, THE FOREIGN MINISTER REFUSED TO SIGN, APPARENTLY OUT OF ANNOYANCE AT EARLIER CAE FOOT-DRAGGING. HIS ONLY CONCESSION WAS TO OFFER TO MOVE UP FROM JUNE TO FEBRUARY 1978 THE NEXT JOINT COMMISSION MEETING AT WHICH THE COMMUNIQUE WILL BE SIGNED.

2. THE AMBASSADOR ALSO NOTED CONTINUED HARASSMENT OF THE CHADIAN COMMUNITY RESIDENT IN THE CAE. FOUR ARABS, WHOM THE GOCAE BELIEVED TO BE CHADIANS, WERE RECENTLY ARRESTED FOR SABOTAGE AND WERE PRESENTED TO THE CHADIAN FOREIGN MINISTER. THE CHADIANS WERE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE FOUR WERE NOT FROM
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CHAD AND A POTENTIALLY SERIOUS INCIDENT WAS AVOIDED. THE CHADIANS ARE APPARENTLY SLOWING DOWN THE FLOW OF GOODS TRANSITTING CHAD FROM NIGERIA TO THE CAE TO MAKE CLEAR TO THE GOCAE THAT COOPERATION AND FRIENDSHIP MUST BE A TWO-WAY STREET.

3. WE ASKED MAD TOINGUE WHETHER THERE HAD BEEN ANY RECENT CLASHES BETWEEN CENTRAL AFRICANS AND CHADIAN REBELS. HE SAID

THAT THE BORDER WAS QUIET ALTHOUGH THERE HAD BEEN INCIDENTS IN THE ST. FLORIS NATIONAL PARK WHERE CHADIAN POACHERS HAD BEEN KILLING GIRAFFES (FOR THEIR TAILS) AND OTHER GAME. HE DISMISSED THESE INCIDENTS AS BEING OF MINOR SIGNIFICANCE.

4. COMMENT: OVER THE YEARS CHAD HAS BECOME LESS DEPENDENT ON THE CAE AND HAS CONSEQUENTLY BEEN MUCH TOUGHER IN ITS NEGOTIATING STANCE. WHILE CHAD HAS WELCOMED BOKASSA'S SUPPORT ON SECURITY ISSUES, NOTABLY HIS PAST HELP AGAINST THE REBELS, IT IS NOT WILLING TO MAKE MAJOR CONCESSIONS ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT IN RETURN.

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